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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 002148

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/16/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [IZ](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [IZ](#) [IT](#) [ITPREL](#)

SUBJECT: ITALY'S NEW IRAQ ENVOY

REF: A. ROME 01646

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[1](#)B. ROME 01664

CLASSIFIED BY: CLASSIFIED BY ECONOMIC MINISTER-COUNSELOR SCOTT KILNER,
REASONS 1.5 B, D.

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: EMBASSY OFFICERS MET ON MAY 13 WITH AMBASSADOR ANTONIO ARPELLINI, WHO WILL BE IN CHARGE OF ITALY'S CIVILIAN AND MILITARY PERSONNEL AS SPECIAL ENVOY IN IRAQ AND REPRESENTATIVE TO THE INTERIM AUTHORITY (REFS A, B). ARPELLINI RETURNED FROM BAGHDAD LAST WEEK HAVING RECEIVED, HE SAID, A CLEAR APPEAL FROM ORHA FOR SWIFT ITALIAN MOBILIZATION OF A TEAM OF TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL EXPERTS TO INTEGRATE WITH ORHA AND IRAQ'S EMERGING MINISTRIES. ARPELLINI PLANS TO TRAVEL ALONE TO WASHINGTON ON MAY 18 TO SECURE CLEAR ASSURANCES THAT THE TEAM THAT THE GOI IS MOBILIZING MEETS USG NEEDS. ARPELLINI SAID THAT HIS TEAM OF ABOUT 40 PEOPLE COULD BE DISPATCHED WITHIN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS. HE SHARES OUR CONCERN THAT ITALIAN COORDINATION WITH CENTCOM IMPROVE. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) ECMIN BEGAN THE MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR ARPELLINI BY STRESSING THE FACT THAT IRAQ REMAINS A MILITARY ZONE, AND, AS SUCH, COORDINATION WITH CENTCOM THROUGH THE GOI'S LNO, GENERAL SANTINI, REMAINS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT. ECMIN DESCRIBED HOW THE EMBASSY'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SECTIONS ARE ARRAYED ON IRAQ ISSUES, AND REVIEWED FOR ARPELLINI VARIOUS CONDUITS FOR INFORMATION, INCLUDING WASHINGTON BRIEFINGS, THE IMMINENT FORMATION OF THE HIGH LEVEL IRAQ RECONSTRUCTION VIRTUAL WORKING GROUP, AND THE PUBLIC INFORMATION PACKETS THAT THE EMBASSY HAS PLACED ON ITS WEB SITE FOR PROSPECTIVE ITALIAN SUBCONTRACTORS AND DONORS OF

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HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE. ON THE POLICY SIDE, ECMIN NOTED THAT WE COUNTED ON ITALIAN SUPPORT FOR THE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAQ AS A PREREQUISITE FOR THE MEDIUM AND LONGER-TERM DEVELOPMENT OF THE IRAQI ECONOMY.

[1](#)3. (C) ARPELLINI RESPONDED WITH THANKS FOR THIS INFORMATION, ADDING THAT THE FLOW OF INFORMATION BETWEEN THE MFA AND THE ITALIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON WAS EXCELLENT. HE WENT ON TO DESCRIBE HIS ROLE AS BEING THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MFA IRAQ TASK FORCE ON THE GROUND IN IRAQ, COMMUTING BACK AND FORTH TO THE REGION AS NEEDED. ARPELLINI DESCRIBED AS "UNPRECEDENTED" THE IMPORTANCE THAT PM BERLUSCONI HAS GIVEN TO ITALY'S "FULL PARTICIPATION" ACROSS THE RANGE OF TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL REQUIREMENTS THAT ORHA HAS IDENTIFIED. HE REPORTED THAT THE GOI WAS FINALIZING THE IDENTIFICATION OF A 30-40 PERSON TEAM TO SEND TO THE REGION IN THE COMING WEEKS. HE NOTED THAT THE GOI WAS EAGER TO BE PART OF A DEMONSTRABLY SUCCESSFUL, COLLECTIVE EFFORT IN IRAQ AND WANTS TO LEVERAGE ITALY'S STRONG HISTORY OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE REGION. THE GOI, ARPELLINI ASSURED, WOULD PROVIDE FOR THE LOGISTICAL NEEDS OF ITS TEAM.

[1](#)4. (C) HAVING WITNESSED OUR SHORT-LIVED NEED FOR ITALY'S FIELD HOSPITAL AND OUR RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW COALITION LEADERSHIP IN IRAQ, ARPELLINI WAS CONCERNED THAT, JUST AS THE GOI BEGINS AN UNPRECEDENTED MOBILIZATION, USG PRIORITIES MAY SHIFT. HE WAS CURIOUS ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S APPOINTMENT OF AMBASSADOR BREMER AS THE SENIOR COALITION OFFICIAL IN IRAQ AND SPECIFICALLY WHETHER HE WOULD BE ARPELLINI'S NEW INTERLOCUTOR. ECMIN UNDERScoreD THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD CLEARLY PRONOUNCED AMBASSADOR BREMER'S AUTHORITY IN IRAQ. HE

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ALSO AFFIRMED THAT ARPELLINI COULD EXPECT TO ENGAGE WITH BREMER AT A POLITICAL LEVEL.

[1](#)5. (C) ECMIN ASKED HOW ARPELLINI PLANNED TO ORGANIZE ON THE GROUND. ARPELLINI REPLIED THAT HE WOULD HAVE OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WHOLE ITALIAN MISSION IN IRAQ, INCLUDING CIVILIAN AND MILITARY PERSONNEL. GENERAL CABIGIOSU (PENDING CONFIRMATION) IS EXPECTED TO ACT AS HIS MILITARY ADVISOR. UNDER ARPELLINI'S LEADERSHIP, A COMMANDER WOULD HAVE OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITALIAN TROOPS IN IRAQ AS WELL AS MILITARY-TO-MILITARY LIAISON WITH THE BRITISH IN BASRA.

16. (C) ECOMIN RETURNED TO THE NEED TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WITH CENTCOM, AND ARMELLINI NOTED THAT HE SHARED THE SAME CONCERN. HE POINTED OUT THAT, DESPITE GETTING CLEARANCE FOR HIS LAST TRIP TO BAGHDAD, WORD HAD NOT YET REACHED BAGHDAD BY THE TIME HE ARRIVED. ARMELLINI ASKED WHETHER THE PROBLEM WAS THE COMPLEX ROUTING OF INFORMATION OR WHETHER ADEQUATE COMMUNICATIONS HAD YET TO BE SET UP. HE NOTED THAT GETTING COORDINATION RIGHT WITH CENTCOM WAS A PRIORITY FOR GENERAL CABIGIOSU.

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ACTION EUR-00

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| INFO | LOG-00 | AID-00 | CIAE-00 | SRPP-00 | EB-00 | VC-00 | TEDE-00 |
| | INR-00 | IO-00 | L-00 | VCE-00 | AC-01 | NEA-00 | NSAE-00 |
| | OIC-02 | OMB-01 | PA-00 | PM-00 | PRS-00 | ACE-00 | P-00 |
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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9917
INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE
JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
AMCONSUL FLORENCE PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MILAN PRIORITY
AMCONSUL NAPLES PRIORITY

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17. (C) COMMENT: ARMELLINI IS FOCUSED ON HOW TO PUT A TEAM TOGETHER THAT MEETS USG NEEDS IN IRAQ, WHILE MAKING THE MOST OF ITALY'S COMPARATIVE STRENGTHS. WE BELIEVE THAT HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON IS WELL-TIMED TO GET THE KIND OF CLEAR GUIDANCE THAT HE IS SEEKING. END COMMENT.
SEMBLER

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